

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

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R 020658Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2359

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2554

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, JO, XF

SUBJ: VIEWS OF FORMER GAZA MAYOR SHAWWA

REF: AMMAN 4150 (AUG 1973)

SUMMARY: FORMER GAZA MAYOR RASHAD SHAWWA TOLD EMBOFFS PREVAILING SENTIMENT IN GAZA STRIP FAVORS CONCEPT OF PALESTINIAN STATE COMPOSED OF WEST BANK AND GAZA, BUT THERE IS NO CONSENSUS ON MODALITIES. HE DOUBTS SUCH STATE IN ANY CASE CAN PROVIDE LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. ANY PALESTINIAN ENTITY WILL INEVITABLY HAVE STRONG NATURAL TIES WITH JORDAN. SHAWWA BELIEVES PLO ATTEMPTING CONVINCE NOTABLES IN WEST BANK AND GAZA TO ASSUME EXPOSED POSITIONS WITH REGARD PALESTINIAN STATE; PLO CAN THEN PLAY MANIPULATIVE ROLE IF STATE SUCCEEDS AND AVOID BLAME IF IT FAILS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF HAD LENGTHY DISCUSSION APRIL 30 WITH RASHAD SHAWWA, FORMER MAYOR OF GAZA AND PATRIARCH OF LOCAL PRO-HASHEMITE CLAN. WHILE NOT EVINCING DEGREE OF PERSONAL  
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PESSIMISM REPORTED REFTTEL RE PROSPECTS OF ME SETTLEMENT

AND FUTURE OF STRIP, HIS POST-WAR VIEWS NEVERTHELESS REFLECT BASIC INABILITY OF GAZANS TO EXERT MUCH WEIGHT IN DETERMINING FUTURE.

2. SHAWWA CONFIRMED THAT PREVAILING SENTIMENT AMONG GAZANS WAS IN FAVOR OF PALESTINIAN STATE IN CONJUNCTION WITH WEST BANK. HE ADMITTED HOWEVER THAT THIS WAS STILL FAIRLY NEBULOUS IDEA, WITH NO CONSENSUS ON SUCH DETAILS AS GOVT STRUCTURE OR LEADERSHIP. HE CAUTIONED ALSO THAT CREATION OF SUCH STATE COULD WELL REPRESENT ONLY SHORT-TERM SOLUTION LEADING TO RENEWED VIOLENCE, IN VIEW OF SENTIMENT WITHIN PLO THAT THIS IS ONLY TACTICAL FIRST STEP. SHAWWA CONCLUDES THAT ONLY LONG-TERM SOLUTION MAY BE RETURN TO MODIFIED VERSION OF 1947 PARTITION PLAN AND HOLDS THAT ISRAEL SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT LOSSES THIS WOULD INVOLVE WOULD BE SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR PERMANENT PEACE.

3. ASSUMING CREATION OF WEST BANK/GAZA STATE, SHAWWA ADVOCATES LINKAGE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTS BY MEANS OF TRI-ANGULAR PIECE OF LAND WITH GAZA EASTERN BORDER AS BASE. SUCH AN AREA, HE BELIEVES, WOULD PROVIDE SPACE IN WHICH TO RESETTLE LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES AND WOULD ENHANCE PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF NEW STATE. SHAWWA IN TURN SEES NATURAL AFFINITY BETWEEN SUCH PALESTINE ENTITY AND JORDAN IN VIEW OF PROXIMITY, EXISTING COMMERCAIL TIES, AND PRESENCE ON EAST BANK OF APPROX MILLION REFUGEES. ACCORDING SHAWWA, GAZAN DESIRE FOR CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH JORDAN IS SO CLEAR-CUT THAT HUSSEIN IS MAKING NO OVERT EFFORT TO BUILD SUPPORT THERE AS HE IS ON WEST BANK.

4. ACCORDING SHAWWA, PRO-EGYPTIAN SYMPATHY IN STRIP IS VIRTUALLY NIL. (THIS ALSO WAS ASSESSMENT OF MIL GOVT SPOKES-MAN.) EVEN LEADERSHIP OF LOCAL PRO-EGYPTIAN FACTION HAD BACKED OFF FROM IDEA OF POLITICAL REUNIFICATION. SHAWWA ATTRIBUTED THIS IN PART TO NUMEROUS SPEECHES SINCE WAR IN WHICH SADAT DECLARED THAT PALESTINIANS MUST DECIDE OWN FATE. GAZANS HAVE INTERPRETED THIS TO MEAN SADAT IS WASHING HANDS OF PALESTINE PROBLEM.

5. SHAWWA STATED THAT AS PART OF PLO EFFORT TO PERSUADE  
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WEST BANK AND GAZA NOTABLES TO PARTICIPATE IN GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE, HE HAD BEEN ASKED WHILE IN BEIRUT TWO MONTHS AGO TO BE MEMBER OF PALESTINIAN DELEGATION BUT HAD REFUSED. HE SEES PLO STRATEGY AS ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCE GROUP OF PLIABLE LEADERS RESIDENT IN OCCUPIED AREAS TO NEGOTIATE IN GENEVA FOR PALESTINIAN ENTITY AND THEN SERVE AS NUCLEUS OF INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENT AMENABLE TO PLO CONTROL. IF STATE PROVES GOING CONCERN, PLO COULD EITHER CONTINUE

TO MANIPULATE LEADERSHIP OR BRUSH THEM ASIDE. IF STATE FAILS, ONUS WOULD BE ON VISIBLE LEADERS RATHER THAN PLO.

6. SHAWWA ALSO SAID PLO WAS SEEKING REPS FROM WEST BANK AND GAZA FOR MEETING OF PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL NOW SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 1. SAID HE HAD BEEN ORALLY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE BUT DECLINED. HE CONFIRMED RUMORS OF ISRAELI WARNINGS THAT INDIVIDUALS ACCEPTING WOULD BE BARRED FROM RE-ENTERING TERRITORIES.

7. COMMENT. IN TWO DAYS OF DISCUSSIONS EMBOFFS RECEIVED GENERAL IMPRESSION THAT VAST MAJORITY OF GAZANS ARE BASICALLY APOLITICAL AND WISH PRIMARILY TO BE LEFT ALONE TO ENJOY RELATIVE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING. THEY SEE AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVES AS EITHER UNPALATABLE, RISKY, OR DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT, AND IN ANY CASE SENSE THAT THE OUTCOME IS IN HANDS OF GREAT POWERS AND BEYOND THEIR POWER TO INFLUENCE. AIRGRAM ON GENERAL GAZA SITUATION WILL FOLLOW.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PALESTINIANS, REFUGEES, PARAMILITARY FORCES, PEACE TALKS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 02 MAY 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GarlanWA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974TELAV02554  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740105-0087  
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**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** AMMAN 4150 (AUG 1973)  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GarlanWA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 20 JUN 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <20 JUN 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <30 JAN 2003 by GarlanWA>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** VIEWS OF FORMER GAZA MAYOR SHAWWA  
**TAGS:** PFOR, IS, JO, XF, PLO, (SHAWWA, RASHAD)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005